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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 CANBERRA 000674

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SUBJECT: ASSISTING AFGHANISTAN BEYOND THE ELECTION -
AUSTRALIA

REF: STATE 74362

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Classified By: POLITICAL COUNSELOR JAMES COLE. REASON: 1.4 (C) and (D)

¶1. (C/NF) Summary: Foreign Ministry and AusAID officials have expressed support for the new U.S. whole-of-government strategy for Afghanistan. They noted that, under current planning, DFAT is dispatching two diplomats to Khandahar and Tarin Khowt for localized coordination and is requesting U.S. agreement for another diplomat to be embedded at the U.S. Kabul Embassy. AusAID officials said that they have been talking to various Afghan ministries to identify areas of need and hope to dispatch additional personnel to Afghanistan this autumn. In September, an agricultural specialist will start work with UNAMA. On the security side, Australia is leaving its force that is providing extra security for the Afghan elections in theater four months past the August 20 polls. DFAT officials also noted that Australia has committed USD \$200 million over five years to NATO's Afghan National Army Trust Fund. Embassy DATT has relayed these points to the Ministry of Defense and received a response similar to his DFAT and AusAID counterparts. DFAT, AusAID and Defense will further examine U.S. request for post-presidential election assistance and coordinate a more detailed response. End summary.

¶2. (C/NF) on July 20, DFAT First Assistant Secretary for South and West Asia, Middle East and Africa Division, Deborah Stokes, and Director of the Afghanistan and Iraq Branch, Neil Hawkins discussed areas for potential assistance to Afghanistan in the post- August 20 election period. Both noted that Australia is in the process of implementing earlier commitments to provide civil and security assistance to the Afghan government.

¶3. (C/NF) On the civilian side, Stokes told Polcouns, Australia is sending two diplomats this week to Afghanistan, one to be stationed in Khandahar and the other being posted to Tarin Khowt. These individuals will, according to Stokes, will help better coordinate civilian and military efforts in the region. Stokes added that Australia has approached Special Representative Richard Holbrooke's office permission to embed another diplomatic officer to be embedded at the U.S. Kabul Embassy. and that officer will cover whole-of-country coordination.

¶4. (C/NF) Hawkins stated that the Australians are leaving their 120 man force that is providing extra security for the Afghan elections in theater four months past the August 20

polls. Stokes noted that Australia has committed USD \$200 million over five years to NATO's Afghan National Army Trust Fund. "This should compare well with what others have committed," Stokes added. This amount is second only to the US's contribution, Hawkins noted. Stokes also noted that Australia has sent two diplomats, one to the Hague and the other to Brussels, to act as coordinators between Australia and its NATO allies.

15. (C/NF) AusAID Deputy Director General Catherine Walker told Polcouns on July 21 that her agency supports the new U.S. whole-of-government strategy in Afghanistan. Though AusAid does not at this point have its own personnel in country (Kabul), several contractors are working with the Afghan Health, Education, Agriculture and Rural Rehabilitation and Development to identify areas of need. Walker said that AusAID is working to increase its presence. Walker said that AusAID is working to increase its presence in Afghanistan and hopes to have a senior official in Kabul around October this year. In September, an agricultural specialist will start work with UNAMA. She added that AusAID is interested in working with the World Bank to find ways to better implement the National Solidarity program in the more dangerous southern provinces. Other AusAID priorities are to look at new approaches to enhancing Oruzgan's provincial administration and to work with the U.S. on agricultural issues. Walker said that AusAID is studying setting up a framework for a deployable civilian team modeled after the U.K.'s Stabilization Team.

16. (C/NF) Embassy DATT relayed points to Ministry of Defense First Assistant Secretary for International Policy Simeon Gilding on July 22. Gilding responded similarly to his DFAT and AusAID counterparts. DFAT, AusAID and Defense will further examine U.S. request for post-presidential election assistance and coordinate a more detailed response.

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